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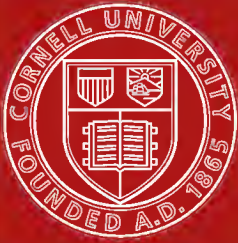


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EXPLANATORY NOTICE

ON THE

Display of Ancient Warfare

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Representing the Attack of the Burmese stronghold by the
Siamese, during their Expedition Against Tavoy.

In the Year B. E. 2330 (1787 A. D.)

BY THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
MILITARY TOURNAMENT
FOR
The Year B. E. 2455.

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The Siamese Combined Army under Chow Phya Ratana Bhilbidh.

INTRODUCTION.

The aim of the Committee of the Military Tournament in Bangkok Circle for the year B. E. 2465 is to give the public an opportunity of witnessing an interesting spectacle, and also of sharing in charitable works, such as the purchase of aeroplanes and in general aid to the services of the army, navy, etc. Advertisements have already been published in the newspapers, but, in order to give to the spectator every due convenience and satisfaction for the money spent, the programme for this year includes a "display of ancient warfare" which will be explained at length in the present notice, and which the Committee have endeavoured to make as interesting as possible.

The Committee, being aware of the fact that a spectacle of this kind cannot fail to arouse criticism, have decided to publish this explanatory notice with the object of forestalling it to make the spectators understand the line followed, and to answer all questions arising in their minds in the presence of such or such peculiarity.

The Committee wish to make it quite clear that neither in the display nor in the compilation of the present notice, has it been their secret intention to show off an historical knowledge superior to that of the spectator or of the reader. They have merely compiled from the Royal History of Siam and other Chronicles and from books written by competent historians, and they have tried as far as possible to adhere closely to these sources. But, naturally, knowledge obtained from books, can never rival knowledge derived from the actual vision of the events, and as a display of this kind is made for the eyes, there is necessarily some guesswork, where the Committee has been unable to find historical authority. The spectators must remember that the events represented having taken place in the year B. E. 2330 (1787 A. D.) that is to say 135 years ago their reconstitution was not an easy task. The purpose of this notice is thus twofold :—

Firstly, to give to the spectators of this display of ancient warfare a brief account of the documents which have been used, which prove that the events represented are strictly historical, and to show in the form of a play an example of the deeds accomplished by our ancestors for the love of their country, which are well worth remembering with gratitude.

Secondly, to let the spectators distinguish between the details which are certainly accurate because they are grounded on the records mentioned above, and those which being too important to be omitted have been reconstructed by conjecture because such documents were not available.

In the present notice, all such conjectures are pointed out, but the author cannot vouch for their correctness. They are mere guesswork intended to fill the gaps.

The readers are kindly requested to keep these facts in their minds, and the Committee of the Military Tournament begs the indulgence of the public for any shortcomings or defects, either in the display or in this notice.



THE ORIGINS OF THE EXPEDITION AGAINST TAVOY IN THE YEAR B. E. 2330 (1787 A. D.)

The Siamese and the Burmese were almost continually at war with each other during the time when Ayudhya was Capital of Siam. If for some short periods both countries remained at peace and exchanged diplomatic relations such periods were regularly followed by a renewal of hostilities. The last war took place in the reign of Somdet Phra Chao Ekathat (alias Khun Luang Phra Tinang Suriyamarindr) when the Burmese invaded Siam and completely destroyed Ayudhya, in the beginning of the year B. E. 2310 (1767 A.D.) After Phra Chao Tak Sin had restored the independence of Siam and established the Capital at Krung Thonburi, he had to wage war with the Burmese, and the hostilities occupied the whole of his reign, and ceased only when the Burmese were busy elsewhere (as for instance during the Chinese invasion) or when they had to deal with internal troubles. Except on such occasions, the Burmese as soon as the dry season began, had no other object in view than to attack the Siamese cities or to make incursions into Siamese territory. One can say that during Phra Chao Tak Sin's reign, the relations between Siam and Burma consisted chiefly in making war !

In the year B. E. 2325 (1782 A.D.) His Majesty King Rama I ascended the throne as Supreme King of Siam established the Chakri dynasty and founded the city of Bangkok (Krung Sriratanakosindara). At that time, Burma was still a prey to domestic troubles, and for 3 years Siam was not disturbed by her neighbour. But as soon as King Bodaw Paya (known by the Siamese generally as King Padung) had ascended the throne of Burma and put down the revolution and reorganized the whole country, his first thought was to turn once more against Siam. In the year of the Snake, B.E. 2328 (1785, A.D.) he sent an army numbering over 140,000 men into Siamese territory, and another one in the year of the Horse B. E. 2329, (1786 A. D.) in the hope that he would be able to conquer Siam for good. But His Majesty King Rama I with H.R.H. Krom Phra Rajavang Bovor Surasihanad, offered a strong resistance displaying tactics and strategy which were remarkable according to the standard of the times. The Burmese forces were twice defeated, and fled, without having done any harm to Siam. The losses sustained by the enemy in men, elephants, horses, and

provisions, were so severe that they were compelled to give up their plans for further aggressions against Siam.

✓ In the year of the Goat B. E. 2230, (1787 A.D.) H. M. King Rama I thinking that he had now a favourable occasion for attacking Burma and taking his revenge, ordered the mobilization of a great army of 80,000 men, which would march against Burma at the opening of the dry season. But before the army took the field, events happened which compelled the King to change his mind.

King Bodaw Paya had just dispatched a Burmese army to subdue the Shan cities which were still reluctant to acknowledge his suzerainty and these troops were further sent against the cities of Lan Na Thai (nowadays called > Monthon Phak Bayab) which had in former times been under the domination of Burma but had just returned to Siam, and which he wished to reconquer. The greatest and most conspicuous town of Lan Na Thai was then Nakhon Lampang, for Chieng Mai was deserted as a result of the wars between Burma and Siam in the reign of Phra Chao Tak Sin. A little before the invasion of Lan Na Thai by the Burmese army, H. M. King Rama I had commanded Phya Kavila the Chief of Nakhon Lampang and ancestor of the present princely family of Chieng Mai, to take with him a number of emigrants and to restore Chieng Mai as a Siamese city. The King had further appointed Nai Kamsom, Phya Kavila's younger brother to be Governor of Nakhon Lampang. But Phya Kavila had only a few men with him, and was not in a position to restore so great a city as Chieng Mai had been in the past. He established himself at Pasang, at the confluence of the Me Tha with the Me Ping (now in Lampun district). The main body of the Burmese army which was invading Lan Na Thai was composed of the troops, numbering over 45,000 men, which had been sent against the Shans, and which, after the conquest of Chieng Sen and Chieng Rai, were finally attacking Nakhon Lampang. To these forces, Bodaw Paya added reinforcements amounting to 35,000 men, who laid siege to Pasang. His object seems to have been the capture of Chieng Mai and Nakhon Lampang which were the two most important towns of Lan Na Thai, as well as the capture of Phya Kavila who was the most prominent man in the same region.

When this news reached Bangkok, King Rama I seeing that the Burmese force was very strong (over 70,000 men) and that Lan Na Thai which had been formerly under Burmese supremacy had just returned to Siam, thought it would not be advisable to launch the great Siamese army against

Burma according to his former plan, and to abandon the Northern cities to their fate. Besides, the King feared that the Siamese army, if marching against Burma through Lan Na Thai, would not be able to resist for very long, and that Siam might suffer a decisive defeat, before victory could be won in Burma. The King therefore gave up his former plan provisionally and decided that H. R. H. Krom Phra Rajawang Bovor Surasihanad, should first take 60,000 men to repulse the Burmese invading of Lan Na Thai, after which he would have to reorganize the country.

When Krom Phra Rajawang Bovor Surasihanad had gone to the North with his army in the dry season of the year B. E. 2330, there were still 20,000 soldiers remaining in Bangkok. The King thought that it would be a great pity to disband these men, and when anxiety was no longer felt about the troops which had been sent to the North, he planned to use those 20,000 men for some other profitable expedition. He decided accordingly to lead them in person against Tavoy, a dependance of Burma. He would thus acquire a knowledge of that portion of the Burmese territory which was adjacent to Siam, knowledge which might be useful in future campaigns against Burma. There were two reasons why he chose Tavoy. If one looks on the map of that region, one sees that Tavoy lies in the Southern part of Burma, very far from the Capital, but close to the Siamese territory. An army coming from Siam and passing through the district of Kanburi, could easily reach the place in a few days. Besides, there were to the South of Tavoy, two towns, viz. Mergui and Tenasserim, which had been under the suzerainty of Siam until the destruction of Ayudhya by the Burmese in the year B. E. 2210. If the Siamese troops took possession of Tavoy, they would cut Mergui and Tenasserim off from Burma and thus conquer three important towns at the same time.

The second reason was, that the inhabitants of Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim were not all Burmese. They were simply under the domination of the Burmese who oppressed them in such a way that their rule had grown very unpopular. The Siamese army, if not very numerous, might well receive assistance from these inhabitants who would be only too glad to help in the victory over their masters.

Another important point was that the conquest of Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim would give to the Siamese armies an excellent base for further attacks upon Burma, because the most serious difficulty of all the Burmese wars was the crossing of the mountain ranges and the defiles leading from one country into the other. If the ground on both sides of the mountains were in their

possession, the march of the army and the transportation of the provisions would become an easy matter.

Such were the reasons which induced the King to start on an expedition against Tavoy. Even if the Siamese could not take it, they would still get some profit by becoming better acquainted with the topography of the country.

A detailed account of the regulations and movements of the Siamese troops which attacked the Burmese stronghold during the Tavoy expedition B.E. 2330 (1787 A.D.) according to the historical records.

The Siamese forces led by H.M. King Rama I against Tavoy numbered over 20,000 men. They were, according to the old records, divided into five armies, viz.

FIRST, ADVANCED ARMY : 5,000 MEN.

Commander : Chao Phya Ratanabibidh (Son was his original name)
Samuhanayok

Second in Command (Palat) : Phya Maha Ammat.

SECOND, ADVANCED ARMY : 3,000 MEN.

Commander : Chao Phya Mahasena (Pli) Samuha Phra Kalahom.

Second in command : Phya Surasena.

THIRD ADVANCED ARMY : 3,000 MEN.

Commander : Phya Yomaraj (Bunnag).

Second in command : unknown.

ROYAL MAIN ARMY : 10,000 MEN.

In supreme command : H.M. King Rama I Chief of Staff (Yokrabat) :
H.R.H. Chao Fa Krom Luang Isara Sunthorn (who was afterwards King under the title of Rama II).

Quarter Master General (Kiek Kai) : Chao Phya Phra Khlang (Hon).

According to the ancient Siamese style the Royal Army had usually two flanking columns or wings, a right one and a left one, but it has not been possible to ascertain the names of their commanders. Phya Siharaj

Tejo is mentioned in the old texts, but his duties are not specified : he was probably in command of the left wing, and Chao Fa Krom Luang Chakr Chestha (the most prominent among the King's brothers) whose name and duties are not mentioned, was possibly in the same army, and in command of the right wing.

Rear Column between 2,000 and 3,000 men. Commander : Chao Fa Krom Luang Deb Hariraks (the King's nephew).

The names of the other officers are not known.

The name of Krom Phra Rajavang Bovor Satharn Bhimkh is also omitted in the records, but one may surmise that this Prince did not accompany the army, because at that time, when the first and the second Kings were both away from the Capital, the Wang Lang was usually entrusted with its defence.

The forces enumerated above left Bangkok on Saturday the 5th day of the waxing moon of the 2nd month, in the year of the Goat, B. E. 2330 (1787 A.D.) They proceeded first by water to Rajburi, ascended the Menam Khwae Noi and mustered at Tha Takua (on the Menam Noi, in the district of Kanburi), whence they crossed overland in a westward direction towards Tavoy. There were two routes leading to Tavoy through the mountain-range marking the frontier between Siam and Burma. The usual one, followed by the merchants, crossed the frontier at Bong Ti : it was an easy way, the mountains being not very high there, but it was long and winding. The other route passed through Khao Sung and crossed over high mountains : it was very difficult, but by far the shortest. On this occasion, the King ordered his armies to follow this last route, because it was shorter and might enable them to reach their aim sooner. Another reason which the records do not mention, but which may be easily surmised, is, that the Burmese at Tavoy, having only scanty information about the movements of the Siamese troops, would rather expect them to come by the usual way through Bong Ti, and would watch for them and organize their resistance accordingly. It is probably that in order to baffle the enemy's projects, King Rama I swerved from the common way and passed through Khao Sung. But the difficulties of the route were so great that this decision was not very advantageous after all. A number of elephants slipped and fell down into precipice, together with their drivers and the King said that "had he known beforehand that the way was so bad, he would never had conducted his children and nephews through it." But when he had got once entangled in that daring enterprise, he made every endeavour to carry it out, and lead his armies safely into Burma.

The Burmese preparations for resistance were as follows:—General Keng Wun Mengyi had been in Tavoy since the previous year (B. E. 2329), in command of an army which was originally intended for reinforcing the Burmese troops operating in Siam, but which, after the defeat of the Burmese, had to remain in Tavoy to resist possible Siamese incursions. Keng Wun Mengyi instructed the Governor of Tavoy, Meng Keng Sa, to levy at once an army of 7000 men, and dispatched as reinforcement another army (whose Commander is not named) numbering 5000 men.

The Governor of Tavoy sent Nat Mi Leng with 3000 men as an advance-guard to defend the post of Wang Po, at the mouth of a pass through which the Siamese army, descending from the mountain-range, had to march before reaching the plain. He took the 4000 remaining men and stationed himself at Kli Ong, behind the line of defence of Wang Po, and near the road leading to Tavoy. The Burmese reinforcement of 5000 men took up position in the plain, on the way from Kli Ong to Tavoy, where they made a Khai Peek Ka (crow's wing camp) e.g. a system of Field Fortifications connected by lines of Stockades.

The plan of the Burmese was apparently to prevent the Siamese army from debouching out of the passes. If they succeeded, the result might be far reaching, for the Siamese would then be unable to deploy their frontage: their numerical superiority would be useless, and they would soon suffer from want of provisions. But it seems that for the purpose of blocking up the defiles, the Burmese forces were numerically inadequate, and what is worse, they divided themselves into three detachments, probably considering it important to hold the towns lying along the road, like Kli Ong. The result was that they were unable to keep the enemy in check, and the Siamese army soon broke through their lines, and poured down into the Tavoy plain, as will be explained now.

Three battles were fought: the first at Wang Po, the second at Kli Ong, and the third the Siege of the Khai Peek Ka.

The battle at Wang Po. As soon as Chao Phya Ratanabibidh reached Wang Po, he launched his army against the enemy's camp, which offered a strong resistance. Phra Senanand who led the attack was wounded by a gunshot and was thus unable to carry the position. Phya Maha Ammat launched a second attack, which did not prove more successful. When the advance guard of the second and third armies had joined them, they tried again with the sole result that they suffered severe losses: Phya Surasena and Phya Sombatibal

were shot and died on the battle-field. It became necessary to take up a position near the enemy's camp and to wait till the three armies could unite and be able to take part in the offensive. They waited for 15 days on account of the difficulties experienced in crossing the mountains, as explained above. When the three armies had joined together, the place was stormed and carried on Sunday the 10th day of the waning moon of the 3rd month.

The battle at Kli Ong. The troops of Nät Mi Leng which had fled from Wang Po joined their forces to those of Meng Keng Sa who was waiting at Kli Ong. The trials of the Siamese had now come to an end : having taken the important position of Wang Po and reached the Tavoy plain, their march was now easy. The three armies hurried in pursuit of the fugitives, reaching Kli Ong simultaneously and joined together in the attack. After three days contest, the Burmese troops fled away in disorder, and Kli Ong was taken on Monday, the 2nd day of the waxing moon of the 4th month. The Siamese mustered their forces there and remained about a fortnight requisitioning the necessary provisions and making all their preparations for the attack upon Tavoy.

The Siege of the Khai Peek Ka. While the Siamese army was achieving victory at Kli Ong, the Royal Army reached Wang Po. There King Rama I received news that the enemy had still an army in the plain and was barring the road from Kli Ong to Tavoy. Their stronghold consisted of a succession of field fortifications stretching their frontage across the plain, and connected with each other by lines of stockades (nowadays lines of field trenches are used in place of stockades, with field fortifications at intervals, as points of resistance). But behind this line, there were neither reinforcements nor any other entrenchments upon which they could eventually fall back.

The King, considering that the campaign had been successful so far, since the enemy had suffered two severe defeats one after the other, realized that it would be impolitic to lose time, and accordingly, he directed the advanced armies to hasten and storm the Khai Peek Ka in a single day. It is not likely that he gave that order without first adding reinforcements which were probably formed by the three following detachments :

- 1) the army-corps of Phya Siharaj Tejo Jai of the Kalahom Department, which was originally a part of the Royal army, but was for the occasion incorporated into that of Chao Phya Mahasena.

- 2) the Vieng Chan detachment which was under the command of Chao Indr (who was a son of Chao Siribunsan, a younger brother of Chao Nondasen Chief of Vieng Chan, and the great grandfather of Somdet Chao Fa Krom Phya

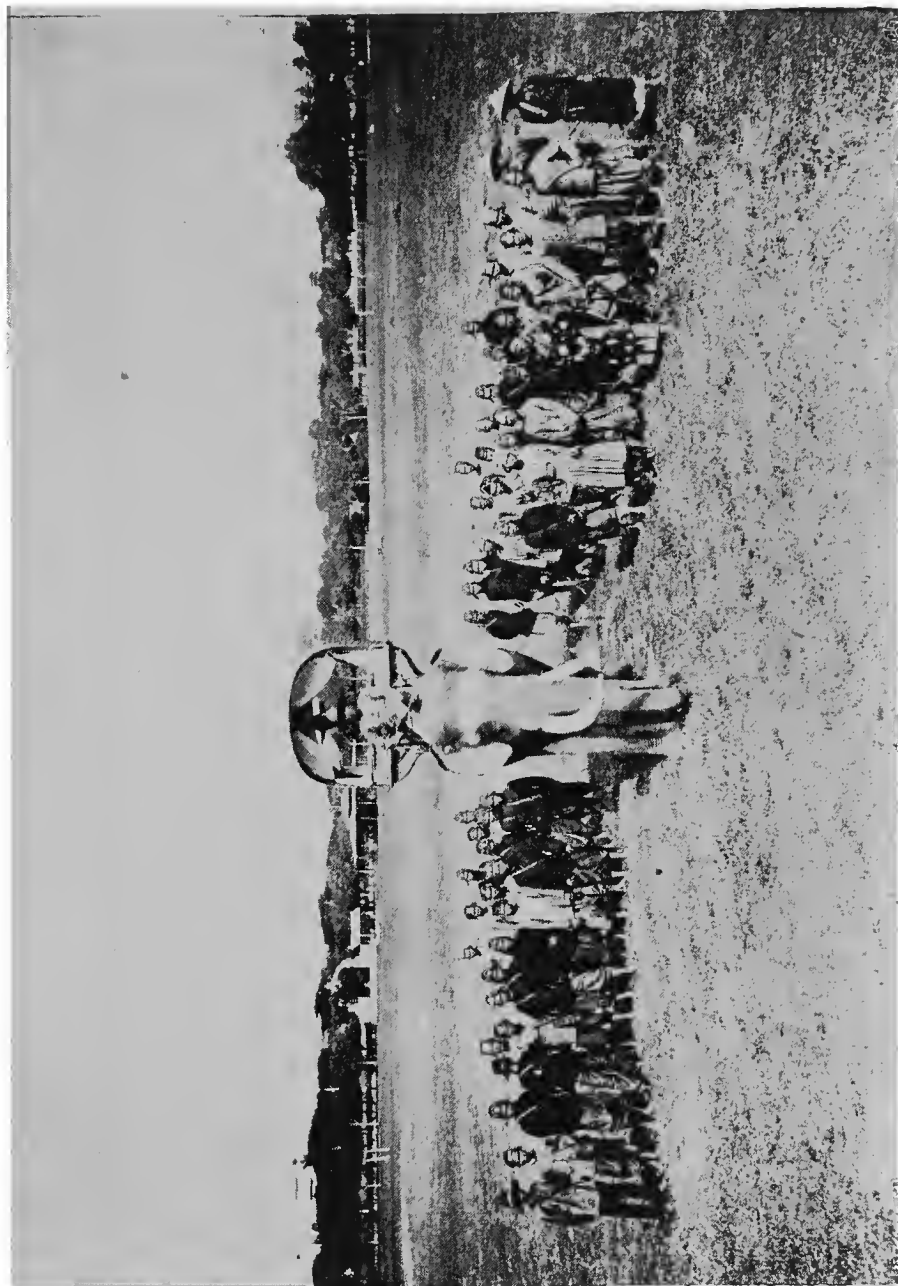
Bamrab Prapaks). Chao Indr according to the records certainly accompanied King Rama I in his expedition.

3) the Annamite detachment of Ong Chieng Su (afterwards King of Annam under the title of Gia Long, and founder of the present Annamite dynasty), who according to the same records took part in the campaign.

All that has just been said about these reinforcements is mere gussework and may be inaccurate : the documents being silent on the matter, one must abide by hypothesis.

When the commanders of the three advance-armies had received the King's order (and his reinforcements), they left Kli Ong and arrived before the enemy's stronghold on Friday, the 8th day of the waning moon of the 4th month, and launched all their men simultaneously. The battle-array is thus described in the Royal Chronicle : " The nobles, the generals and officers scattered their red umbrellas all over the plain." The use of this peculiar expression, only in the present instance and not in the description of other battles, may be explained by the desire of the historian to impress upon his readers the fact that all the generals and officers hurled their men simultaneously, in order to comply with the King's command to " seize the Khai Peek Ka in a single day," and to give His Majesty full satisfaction by displaying a more strenuous spirit than at Wang Po or Kli Ong. As a matter of fact, if one refers to the narrative of the battles at Wang Po, one will see that the first attack was conducted by Phra Senanand, the second one by Phya Maha Ammat, and the third one by Phya Surasena and Phya Sombatibal (who both died in action). From what precedes, it is easy to infer that according to ancient tactics, the attack on a fortified position was not carried on by the whole strength of the army. The Commander entrusted an officer with a definite mission, and another officer with another mission, and each officer took only the men in his own command. When it was necessary to make use of a combined body of troops it was also necessary to send out a considerable number of officers. As regards the attack upon the Khai Peek Ka all the men belonging to the advance armies shared in the attack with a view to reducing the enemy's stronghold in the shortest possible time. Consequently, [" the red umbrellas of the generals and officers were scattered all over the plain," because a great number of such officers, if not all, took part in the action. Such is, no doubt, the correct interpretation of that sentence, which does not mean that the nobles, the generals and officers opened their red umbrellas on this special occasion of the attack upon the Khai Peek Ka.

The attack was executed, on the side of the Siamese, with great gallantry, but the Burmese showed an equal courage. Both sides began the action at dawn



Leaders of the Siamese Army.

by a fierce duel of artillery and musketry. By the evening, the Siamese having reached the enemy's lines applied their ladders to climb up the walls and blew up all the gates. The Burmese ran away that same night.

The battle which has just been related was fought from both sides with the utmost gallantry and may be considered as the fiercest fight in the whole campaign against Tavoy. The Committee of the Military Tournament has consequently decided to take it as the topic of a play. This play begins with skirmishing reconnoitring and signalling by Scouts (kong sam hok chet hok) according to the ancient Siamese "Art of War" after which the Siamese army rushes forward and begins a violent attack with cannons and muskets. Then, the Siamese coming close to the stronghold climb up the walls and storm the camp with great ardour. The flight of the Burmese puts an end to the spectacle.

The subsequent march of the Siamese troops with their Burmese prisoners past the Royal Pavilion forms no part of the story, and it has no other object than to pay an appropriate homage to His Majesty the King and to respectfully inform Him that the Tournament has come to an end.

The following is a summary of the events which took place after the Siamese victory in case some readers might be anxious to know the result of the expedition.

After the Siamese had taken the Khai Peek Ka, they hastened in pursuit of the enemy, and reached Tavoy at daylight. As soon as Keng Wun Mengyi knew that the Siamese were before Tavoy, fear seized him for he had no confidence in the inhabitants and thought that they would side with the invaders. He took his men with him and crossed the river, abandoning the town to its fate. But when the commanders of the Siamese advanced armies saw that the town was not protected, they suspected some trick. They did not enter the city but threw up entrenchments around the place except on the side watered by the river. When Keng Wun Mengyi realized that the Tavoyans and the Siamese had not yet joined together, he recovered his presence of mind, and came back into the town.

On his arrival before Tavoy, King Rama I made a thorough survey of the place and of the neighbouring country, and came to the conclusion that an attack upon the town now would be untimely: even if his troops were successful, they were too weak to keep hold of their conquest. The Siamese army had acquired a thorough knowledge of the country and of the strength of the Burmese. They had been victorious in a manner sufficient to excite their pride. But they had not made full preparations for the capture of Tavoy. For all these reasons, the

King forbade his troops to attack, even when he had received from the generals and officers the assurance that they were ready.

After a fortnight's stay before Tavoy, the King gave the order to go back to Bangkok. The Burmese did not dare to follow him, and he reached the Capital safely the same year B. E. 2330.



Description of the three advanced armies of the Lao detachment of Vieng Chan, of the Annamite detachment, and of the Burmese army, which take part in the display, according to the historical documents or the Committee's conjectures when such authorities are not available.

The dispositions of the Siamese Army appearing in the display are based on the evidence given by the names of the commanders and their lieutenants mentioned in the records. The following information concerns only the three advanced armies and the Lao and Annamite detachments which took part in the attack upon the Khai Peek Ka between Kli Ong and Tavoy, but details concerning the Royal army, are omitted in the present notice.

First however, it is necessary to explain the system of military conscription and provincial administration in the reign of King Rama I.

As regards the military conscription, the system in force was that of personal service due to the state. Those who were liable to service performed it according to their affiliation : for instance, if a man who was liable to service in such and such a department (Krom) had a son, the latter, when he reached the age of conscription, served in the same department as his father. The whole system was founded on affiliation and there is still a survival of it in the modern Siamese expression "But Mu" (a son belonging to the same class.) Generally speaking, the men liable to service were divided into two classes : those who had to serve in person, and those who had to pay a personal forfeit called in Siamese "ngoen kha rajakarn." These two classes were filled up according to the actual needs of the state either in men or in money. The men liable to service in the capital were distributed amongst the various departments of the administration and served either as soldiers or as civilians (Phonlartien). There were two great departments, corresponding to these two divisions.



The Mahadhaya Army under Chow Phya Ratana Bhibhidh.

1) The *Kalahom* headed by Chao Phya Mahasena the Samuha Kalahom was a military organization uniting all the offices of the capital, such as the eight regiments of bodyguards (entrusted with the duty of guarding the King's person), the six contingents of auxiliary soldiers (including the golden shield- and lance-bearers, etc.) These troops were entrusted with the defence of the capital. In addition to them, there were a number of various offices, (the enumeration of which would be too long) and foreign contingents composed of the aliens who earned their living in Siam under the King's protection, like the Mons, the Portuguese (who had for a long time mixed with the Siamese and ceased to be genuine Europeans: they are still known as Farang Kadi Chin), the Chams, and the Persians. Except for those whose duties were strictly military, like the Mons and Portuguese sharp-shooters, the foreigners were in the service called "Athamat," that is to say, they were sent on secret missions to the frontiers of the Kingdom, where they tried to get news of the enemy's country. In case of war they were sent before the Siamese, and performed duties according to their nationality; for instance the Portuguese, who were better marksmen than the others, were used as sharp-shooters, the Chams, whose native land was on the sea-shore, were employed as sailors, and the Mons, whose country was originally between Siam and Burmah, were used as spies when a war arose between the two countries. All the categories which have just been enumerated were composed of men liable to personal service. Usually they served "in turn," for three months every year, and carried on their professions during the nine other months, but, in time of war, all the men belonging to this category were called to take up arms.

2) The *Mahatthai* headed by Chao Phya Ratanabibidh thi Samuhanayok was a civil administration and was divided into four ministries managed by the four "posts of the state" (Chattusadom).

A) The Local Government (Krom Müang) under Chao Phya (or Phya) Yomaraj.

B) The Royal household (Krom Wang) under Chao Phya (or Phya) Dhammadikarana.

C) The Treasury (Krom Klang) and harbours (Krom Tha) under Chao Phya (or Phya) Siri Dhammaraj thi Kosathibodi. (At that time he was commonly called Chao Phya Phra Klang).

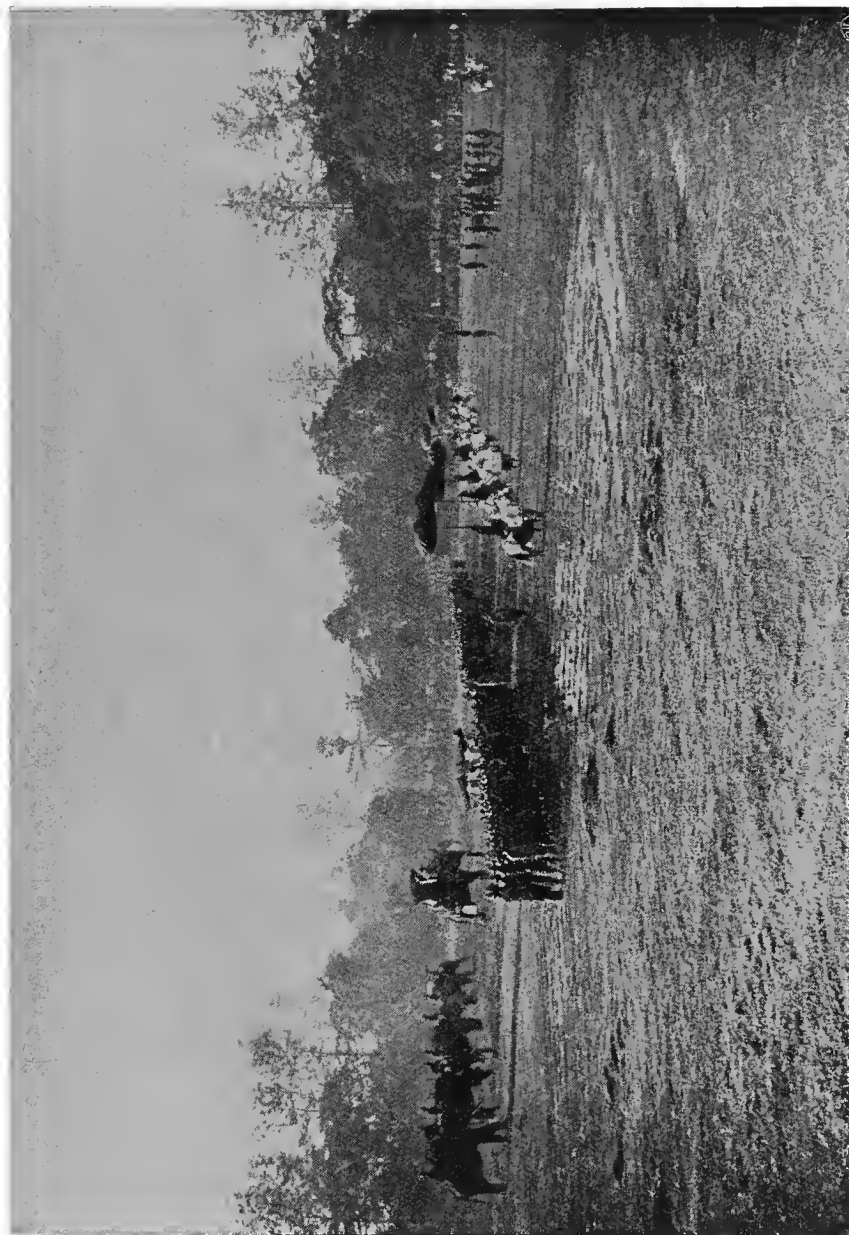
D) The Lands or Agriculture (Krom Na) under Chao Phya (or Phya) Boladeb.

The Mahatthai and its four sections formed the civil administration. It does not come within the scope of this notice to explain that organisation, in detail. All that we wish to point out is that the Mahatthai, although it was a civil administration, had the same system of conscription as the Kalahom. But the service which the men had to perform was purely civil, and was determined by the Ministers according to the needs of the state. It seems that the majority of those who had not to serve in person, but had to pay a forfeit to the state, belonged to the Mahatthai.

In addition to the men liable to the service in the capital there was a number of such men in the provinces. As regards the provincial administration the King appointed in each province: a Governor assisted by a Palat, a Yokrabat and an appropriate number of assistants (Phu Chuei).

Besides this, the officers in charge of the various provincial services, viz. Army (Luang phon), Civil Administration (mahatthai), Local Administration (müang), Royal Household (wang), Treasury (khläng) and Lands (na), were appointed by the Ministers (senabodi chao krasuang), each minister appointing the officers belonging to his own ministry just as the ministers in Bangkok do now-a-days. These petty officials had under their authority a number of men liable to service in their own provinces. The provinces formed three groups, one depending upon the Kalahom, one depending upon the Mahatthai and one (comprising the ports) depending upon the Krom Klang.

All that has just been said applies only to the time of peace. In time of war, all the men liable to service, belonging either to the military or to the civil departments, took up arms without exception. Tradition says that when he wanted to mobilize an army, the King called in audience the princes, ministers and high officials, when the chief of each army was selected, and the appointed commanders called all the men liable to service in their own departments. The officials immediately under their authority were appointed Palat, Generals, field officers, etc. The common soldiers were all the men belonging to the same department, their number being in accordance with the actual requirements. The arms and the equipment were probably furnished by the Kalahom, and the provisions by the Krom Na, in proportion to the needs. If it was necessary to call men from the inland towns the Governor of each province was appointed Commander of the troops levied in his province. Furthermore, if a minister was himself appointed commander of an army, the province dependent on him had to provide that army. But this was not binding, and the troops levied in any province could join any army or be divided between several other armies according to circumstances.



The Kralahom Army under Chow Phya Maha Séna.

For instance, the forces taking part in the expedition against Tavoy did not comprise troops from the Northern Provinces, because these troops (such as those from Bisanulok and Nagara Svarga) had gone with Krom Phra Rajavang Bovor to Lan Na Thai. The same applies to those from the Southern Provinces which were too far away to join the army marching towards Tavoy.

It follows from these explanations, that the three advanced armies operating against Tavoy were probably composed as follows :

1) In Chao Phya Ratanabibidh's army, the majority of the officers were officials of the Mahatthai and Governors of the provinces depending on the Mahatthai, the common soldiers being men liable to service in the same department.

2) In Chao Phya Mahasena's army, the majority of the officers were officials of the Kalahom and Governors of the provinces depending on the Kalahom, the common soldiers being men liable to service in that department.

3) In Phya Yommaraj's army the majority of the officers were, officials of the Krom muang and there were possibly some contingents from the provinces. The common soldiers were men liable to service in the Krom Muang, such as the Nakhonbal, and the men in charge of the prisons (similar to the present policemen), etc. As to the provincial contingents, the men were incorporated in the body of which their Governor had been appointed Commander.

Some of the officers, inferior in rank to the Army Commanders are named in the records on the occasion of their being wounded, sick, killed, etc. But those to whom nothing happened are usually not mentioned, and their names can only be guessed from the list of officials belonging to each department. The conjectures may be wrong in some cases, but there is no other way of filling the gaps.

The following list includes the names of the commanders and various officers appearing in the display. It is intended to show which of these names are mentioned in the records and may therefore be considered as historical, and which have been added by way of conjecture, in order to fill up the staff of each army, the latter being supposed to have really taken part in the expedition, although their names are not mentioned in the text for the reason that nothing particular happened to them. The list shows also what kind of vehicles they make use of in the display, and who are the officers having a right to an umbrella.

FIRST ADVANCED ARMY (Mahatthai.)

- 1) Chao Phya Ratanabibidh (riding upon an elephant with a howdah.
When not upon his elephant, he rides in a palanquin and uses an umbrella made of brocade. His name is mentioned in the records as the Commander of an army.)
- 2) Phya Maha Ammat (on horseback, with an umbrella. He is mentioned in the records as Palat Thap.)

GENERAL OFFICERS ON HORSEBACK WITH UMBRELLA.

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 3) Phya Rajanikul | } | not mentioned in the records. |
| 4) Phya Cha Sen Bodi | | |
| 5) Chao Phya Jaivijit. Governor of Ayudhya | | |
| 6) The Governor of Nagor Rajasima | | |
| 7) The Governor of Subarnburi | | |
| 8) The Governor of Saraburi | | |
| 9) The Governor of Nagor Jaisri | | |
| 10) The Governor of Ang Thong | | |

FIELD OFFICERS (without vehicles and umbrellas).

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| 1) Phra Senanand (mentioned in the records as leading the first attack at Wang Po) | } | not mentioned in the records |
| 2) Phra Bala Asrai | | |
| 3) Luang Mahiddhiyodhi | | |
| 4) Luang Sri Ronarong | | |
| 5) Luang Vasudeb | | |
| 6) Luang Bisnudeb | | |
| 7) Khun Bisnusen | | |
| 8) Khun Phen Sathan | | |
| 9) Khun Bejr Indra | | |
| 10) Khun Mahavijai | | |

SECOND ADVANCED ARMY (Kalahom).

- 1) Chao Phya Mahasena (riding upon an elephant with a howdah.
When not upon his elephant, he rides in a palanquin and uses an umbrella made of brocade. He is mentioned in the records as the Commander of an army).



The Krom Muang Army under Pliya Yomaraj.

Phya Surasena (mentioned in the records as Palat Thap, but he does not appear in the display, because he was killed at Wang Po).

General Officers (on horseback with umbrellas.)

- 2) Phya Siharaj Tejojai (mentioned in the records as belonging to the Royal army, probably as Commander of the left wing, but supposed to have joined the second advanced army with reinforcements from the Royal army).
- 3) Phya Deb Orajun
- 4) Phya Sri Soraraj
- 5) Phya Mahayodha (commanding the Mon contingent).
- 6) Phya Vises Songram (Chief of the Farang sharp-shooters dressed like a Siamese officer, but wearing an European hat and trousers).
- 7) Phya Raj Bangsan (Chief of the Chams, dressed like a Siamese officer, but with a turban made after the Malay fashion).
- 8) The Governor of Rajburi
- 9) The Governor of Bejraburi
- 10) The Governor of Kanburi

not mentioned in the records

FIELD OFFICERS (without vehicles and umbrellas).

- 1) Luang Avudh Agni
- 2) Luang Sri Sarudh
- 3) Luang Krai Narai
- 4) Phra Anuraks Yodha
- 5) Phra Mahasongram
- 6) Luang Saraseni
- 7) Luang Sri Maharaja (Chams, dressed like Phya Raj Bangsan).
- 8) Luang Rudh Saradej (Farang sharp shooters, dressed like Phya Vises Songram).
- 9) Phya Kien
- 10) Phya Phra Ram

Not mentionened in the records.

THIRD ADVANCED ARMY (Krom Muang).

- 1) Phya Yomaraj (riding upon an elephant with a howdah : When not upon his elephant, he rides in a palanquin and uses an umbrella. His name is mentioned in the records as Commander of an army).

Phya Sombatibal (mentioned in the records, but he does not appear in the display because he was killed at Wang Po.

General Officers (on horseback with umbrellas.)

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 2) Phya Bejrada | } | Not mentioned in the records. |
| 3) Phya Bejrapani | | |
| 4) Phya Chularajmontri (Chief of the Persians, dressed according to information supplied by the present Phya Chularajmontri) | } | not mentioned in the records. |
| 5) The Governor of Chantaburi | | |

FIELD OFFICERS (without Vehicles and Umbrellas.)

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1) Phya Deb Phalu | } | not mentioned in the records. |
| 2) Luang Rajasrethi (Persians dressed like Phya Chularajmontri) | | |
| 3) Khun Nagor Bhakdi | | |
| 4) Khun Vicharn Bhudhorn | | |
| 5) Khun Chamnong Buri | | |

As regards the Laotians, tradition says that at that time Chao Indr had an official position in Bangkok, and did not reside in Vieng Chan. But the officers and common soldiers of the detachment were real natives of Vieng Chan, who are mentioned in the records as having, on several occasions, followed the King in his campaigns, and in particular during the present expedition. The contingent which had been levied in Vieng Chan, exactly in the same way as the Siamese troops, was most likely put under Chao Indr's command. The officers appearing in the display are :

- 1) Chao Indr (Chief of the detachment, mentioned in the records, dressed like the Siamese officers but wearing a turban with a knot in the form of a hare's tail,—on horseback with an umbrella).



The Wiengchan Detachment under Prince Indhavongse.



OFFICERS (without Vehicles and Umbrellas.)

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 2) Phya Müang Sai | } | Not mentioned in
the records. |
| 3) Phya Müang Khua | | |

As to the Annamite detachment, its leader Ong Chieng Sü was then a refugee at the Court of Bangkok. It was at the time of the rebellion of the Tay—sons, in Annam who had usurped the royal power and put to death a number of princes of the ancient dynasty. Among those who fled, was Ong Chieng Sü, who took refuge in Bangkok together with a great number of his subjects. The Annamites in the retinue of Ong Chieng Sü were for a long period employed in various offices (such as boatmen in the Royal procession of the Kathin, or dancers on occasion of certain festivities), in time of peace. But in time of war Ong Chieng Sü's men took part in the campaigns as soldiers. In the display, the Annamites and their officers are dressed after Annamite fashion : their arms, musical instruments, flags etc., are of Annamite pattern, and designed according to information supplied by competent Annamites, still living in Bangkok under the protection of the King. But it must be pointed out that their accoutrements may in several instances be erroneous or incomplete, because Annamite utensils and implements are difficult to find in Bangkok. It would have been easy to borrow such accessories from Chinese theatres (ngiu) but then, the soldiers would have looked like Chinese warriors, and no longer like Annamites ! Consequently, if anybody, being well versed in Annamite lore, remarks some defects in their dress, the Committee begs to offer him their apologies. It must be kept in mind too, that Ong Chieng Sü who took shelter in Bangkok for fear of the rebels had probably seen his household destroyed, and that, accordingly, the dress and uniforms of his retinue were very likely far from being complete. The names of the Annamite officers appearing in the display are :

- 1) Ong Chieng Sü (mentioned in the records as Chief of the detachment, dressed like an Annamite prince or high official, riding in an Annamite palanquin, with an Annamite umbrella).

OFFICERS (without Vehicles and Umbrellas.)

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 2) Ong Dük Mü | } | not mentioned in
the records. |
| 3) Ong Wang Ton | | |

Spectators looking superficially at the Annamites will probably find that they are dressed like the Chinese warriors of the Ngiu theatre, but a more careful examination will convince them that many details are quite different. As

a matter of fact, they are not dressed after Chinese fashion, but, as already explained, according to informations supplied by competent Annamites.

It will, no doubt, seem somewhat strange to many spectators that the Burmese wear a " pha chong kraben " and are dressed just like the Siamese. But the uniform of the Burmese has not been invented by the Committee of the Military Tournament, who have on the contrary done their best to find reliable documents. The accoutrements of the Burmese have been taken from the book " Journal of a residence in the Burmhan Empire " by Captain Hiram Cox, an Envoy of the East-India Company who was in Burma nine years after the Tavoy expedition. This book (which is kept in the Vajirañāna National Library) contains several illustrations including a representation of a Burmese soldier. As this book dates from about the same time as the campaign against Tavoy, it is very likely that the Burmese who fought against the Siamese were dressed in the manner represented. Moreover, the Vajirañāna National Library possesses a Burmese manuscript on " Military Art, " which shows the different battle arrays used by the Burmese at that time, and the common soldiers have precisely the same " pha chong kraben " and the same variegated coat as in Capt. Cox's book. This concurring evidence goes far to show that the Burmese accoutrements designed for the purpose of the display are as correct as possible.

The other group of Burmese who look like ordinary Burmese are porters and carriers who were probably not dressed like the soldiers, just as in the Siamese army.

It will be useful in concluding this notice to explain why some officers have umbrellas and others have not. It is a well-known fact that the umbrella was the necessary complement of a palanquin. Consequently, the officers having a right to an umbrella are precisely the same as those who are known as having a right to a palanquin. Now, in the display, the majority of the officers having a right to an umbrella ride on elephants and horses, instead of in a palanquin, because it was much more convenient in such an expedition. (This remark does not apply to Ong Chieng Sü, who, although he might in reality have ridden on an elephant or a horse, is sitting in an Annamite palanquin, because it is a specific Annamite object which helps to distinguish him from the Siamese, and also in view of the difficulty in finding Annamite harness in Bangkok.) When officers rode on elephants or horses, they probably did not use umbrellas because elephants are too high above the ground, and horses too fast for the convenience of the umbrella-bearers. But for the purpose of the display, that difficulty has been solved in this way. The three army commanders do not make use of their umbrellas as long as they sit on their elephants, but if it happens



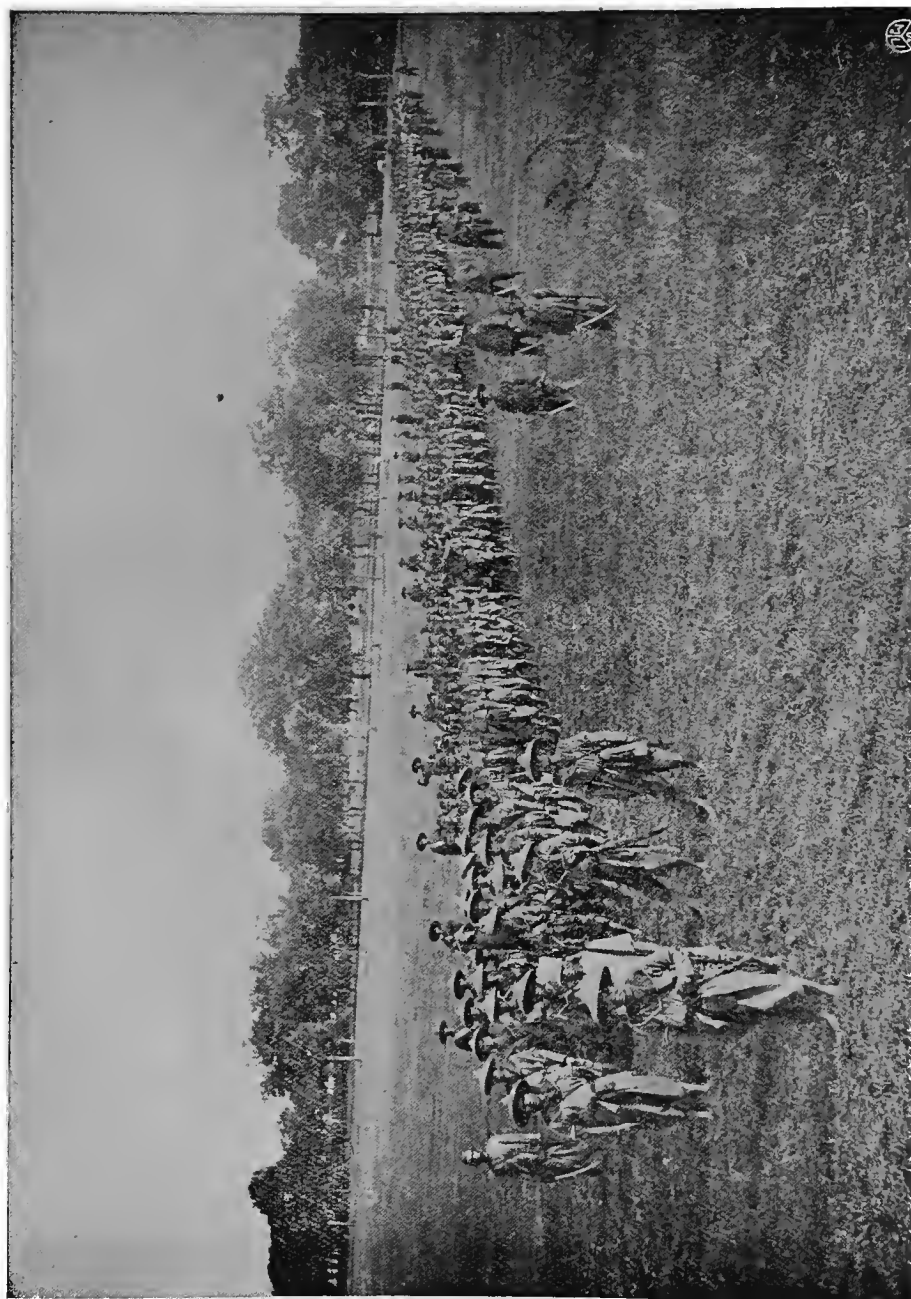
The Annamese Detachment under Ong Chieng Sü (afterwards Emperor
Gialong of Annam.)

that they have to alight (for instance when coming close to the enemy's lines, for, if they remain on their elephants they will be too high and serve as targets), they then enter their palanquins and open their umbrellas. This explains why each of the three army commanders has an umbrella-bearer behind his elephant. As to the officers on horseback, it goes without saying that an umbrella-bearer cannot follow a horse running at full gallop. But when an army is on the march, the horses do not usually gallop, for an infantry officer must remain with his men and ride at a walking pace. There is an instance when a rider is followed by an umbrella-bearer, viz. the procession preceding the ordination ceremony of a priest (buet nag). Consequently, it does not seem erroneous to give an umbrella to the officers on horseback.

The officers of inferior rank to those having a right to a palanquin have, of course, no umbrellas. In reality, they very likely rode horses, as, for an officer, riding is much more convenient than walking. But in the display they are all walking, the Pramen ground being too narrow and already too crowded to allow a large number of horses to appear. Besides, it is difficult to find old harness, and modern ones would offend the eyes of the spectators.

Finally, it is the wish of the Committee of the Military Tournament that this notice may be of some utility to its readers. It should be considered merely as an explanation of the Committee's intentions and conjectures, and it does not aim at forcing the conviction of the readers, who are kindly requested to accept only what they will find trustworthy, according to their opinion or their knowledge.





The Prisoners of War taken from the Burmese Army under Mang Kang Sa
(Governor of Tavoy.)

